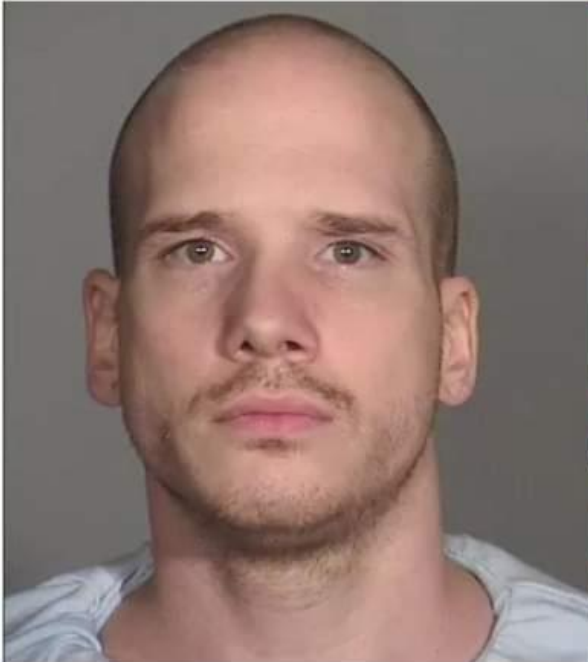


heavy.

Joseph Rosenbaum: 5 Fast Facts You Need to Know



- By [Jessica McBride](#)
- **Updated** Nov 21, 2021 at 5:34pm



Mugshot/FacebookJoseph Rosenbaum

Joseph Rosenbaum was the first man who was shot and killed by [Kyle Rittenhouse](#) in Kenosha, Wisconsin; he was also one of the most controversial characters discussed during the trial.

Rittenhouse, 18, was found not guilty by a jury of shooting Rosenbaum and Anthony Huber to death and wounding Gaige

Grosskreutz, as well as endangering the safety of two other men. The jury agreed with his defense team's argument that Rittenhouse fired in self-defense during a night of protests and riots after the police shooting of Jacob Blake (the local district attorney cleared the officer in the Blake shooting.)

Rosenbaum is controversial because of his past – he was convicted of child molestation-related charges – but Judge Bruce Schroeder ruled that jurors could not be told that information. He was also the focal point of controversy because of his behavior on the night of the shooting; numerous witnesses, even for the prosecution, described Rosenbaum as belligerent and getting into disagreements that night as well as being involved in an arson fire in a dumpster.

[Read profiles on the other men shot: [Anthony Huber](#) and [Gaige Grosskreutz](#).]

Be forewarned that some of the videos in this article are graphic and disturbing.

Here's what you need to know:

1. Rosenbaum, Who Was Born in Waco, Texas, Had an Extremely Troubled Life



mugshot

Court records from the Arizona court system, where he was convicted in a child molestation related case, give the background of Rosenbaum and describe it as extremely troubled. Those records say:

His father, Johnny Cardwell, died in 2002. His mother Regina Rosenbaum lived in Tucson. He had three brothers and two sisters.

The court records say that Rosenbaum was asked to leave his mother's residence but an acquaintance allowed him to stay at her

home, as did her sister and cousin. While there he had “contact with their sons, the minor victims. The five victims range in age from nine to 11 years old.”

One mother noted a burn mark on her son in 2002, and that’s when he said he was molested by Rosenbaum.

Rosenbaum was born in Waco, Texas, to unmarried parents and only met his father twice. His mother and stepfather owned a home where the family lived until he was 6, the report says.

The report says his mother “committed forgery” and was “evading law enforcement for the next seven years,” so the family moved frequently between towns in Texas and Tucson, moving three to four times a year and living with relatives.

His stepfather was an alcoholic who physically and mentally abused his wife and children and did not work, the court records allege.

The records say a relative “sexually abused the defendant and (another minor) on an almost daily basis between ages 10 and 13,” the report says.

“The defendant was raped, touched on his genitals, forced to perform oral sex, and required to watch” the abuse of the other minor, the records allege.

The mother did not know about the abuse until he confided in her at age 18.

He was described as close with his mother and friendly with his siblings. But his “entire extended family is involved with the criminal justice system in some way, with many family members participating in misdemeanor activity,” the court records say.

At age 13, his mother gave her children to welfare authorities, turned herself in and went to prison for two years. From age 13-16, Rosenbaum lived in countless group homes and shelters, where he would run away and “was a constant disciplinary problem because he refused to listen or follow the rules.”

He enjoyed the “rush” or “natural high” of getting in trouble, the report says.

He stayed on the streets for several weeks at age 18. His mother and grandmother asked him to leave because he would not follow the rules. He was in special education classes, had attention deficit disorder, and was suspended for truancy. He bit a teacher and stabbed a teacher with a pencil. He quit school after marijuana was found in his backpack and began to claim the South Palo Verda gang but was described as no longer affiliated with it.

At age 16, he was fired from a fast-food restaurant after two weeks because he stole \$240.

When he was 11, he started using marijuana. By 16, he was using meth, and heroin, cocaine and LSD. At 16, he quit the substances. He got money for drugs by “hustling” and robbing people, the report says.

He was diagnosed with bipolar disorder at age 16.

The report says that he had a “risk to recidivate” which was of “great concern to the community.”

2. Rosenbaum Served Prison Time in Arizona for a Child Molestation Case & Was on Bail for Assault in Wisconsin

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FILED IN COURT
11-19-02
PATRICIA A. GILAND, Clerk
Deputy

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT, PIMA COUNTY, ARIZONA

THE STATE OF ARIZONA,)
Plaintiff,) NO. CR-20021139
v.)
JOSEPH DON ROSENBAUM,) PLEA AGREEMENT
Defendant.)

The State of Arizona and the Defendant agree to the following disposition of this case on the following terms and conditions:

I. SPECIFIC TERMS:

A. THE PLEA: The Defendant, JOSEPH DON ROSENBAUM, agrees to plead guilty to the charge(s) of:

AMENDED COUNT TWO: (SEXUAL CONDUCT WITH A MINOR IN THE SECOND DEGREE, A CLASS THREE FELONY, A PREPARATORY DANGEROUS CRIME AGAINST CHILDREN)

On or about the 27th day of March, 2002, JOSEPH DON ROSENBAUM committed sexual conduct with a minor in the second degree, by intentionally or knowingly attempting to engage in an act of sexual intercourse with _____, a minor under the age of fifteen years, by penetrating the victim's anus with his penis, in violation of A.R.S. §§ 13-1405, 13-603, 13-604.01 (I), 13-701, 13-702, 13-801, 13-804, 13-811 and 13-902. [Field 304] [13-1405] (M) (C)

prison only TAB EMP JR

AMENDED COUNT FIVE: (SEXUAL CONDUCT WITH A MINOR IN THE SECOND DEGREE, A CLASS THREE FELONY, A PREPARATORY DANGEROUS CRIME AGAINST CHILDREN)

On or about the 27th day of March, 2002, JOSEPH DON ROSENBAUM committed sexual conduct with a minor in the second degree, by intentionally or knowingly attempting to engage in an act of sexual intercourse with a minor under the age of fifteen years, by penetrating the victim's anus with his penis, in violation of A.R.S. §§ 13-1405, 13-603, 13-604.01 (I), 13-701, 13-702, 13-801, 13-804, 13-811 and 13-902. [Field 304] [13-1405] (M) (C)

probation available TAB EMP JR

B. THE SENTENCING RANGE: If the Defendant is sentenced to prison by the Court, the following statutory sentencing ranges apply:

EACH COUNT CARRIES:

1. Substantial Mitigated Sentence:	N/A
2. Minimum Sentence:	N/A
3. Presumptive Sentence:	10
4. Maximum Sentence:	15
5. Substantial Aggravated Sentence:	N/A

C. RELEASE/PAROLE: If sentenced to prison, the Defendant must serve approximately 85 percent of his/her sentence before he/she is eligible for release on any basis. If sentenced to probation, the Defendant

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Arizona court recordsA page from Joseph Rosenbaum's court records.

Rosenbaum was a registered sex offender. At the time of his death, he was on the Wisconsin sex offender registry for an Arizona child molestation case.

He faced 11 charges in that case, but they were amended in a plea deal, and Rosenbaum was convicted of amended counts. According to online court records, Rosenbaum received 10 years in prison on Dec. 12, 2002 for sexual contact of a minor, and then was sentenced to 2 years, 6 months for sexual contact of a minor related to the same 2002 incident.

See [part of the complaint here](#).

Some of the counts allege anal rape and oral sex with minors, masturbating in front of a 15-year-old, distributing naked photos of a woman to a minor under age 18, and other similar offenses. In a plea deal, he was convicted of sexual conduct with a minor in the second degree.

SPECIAL CONDITIONS OF PROBATION FOR SEX OFFENDERS

CONTACT WITH CHILDREN:

You shall not initiate, establish, or maintain contact with any minor child under the age of 18 nor attempt to do so except under circumstances approved in advance and in writing by your probation officer.

You shall not contact your children in any manner unless approved in writing by your probation officer.

You shall not reside with any child under the age of 18 unless approved by the sentencing Court.

You shall not enter the premises, nor loiter near where the victim resides, except under the circumstances approved in advance and in writing by your probation officer.

You shall not go near nor loiter within 100 feet of school yards, parks, playgrounds, arcades, or other places primarily used by children under the age of 18.

You shall not date or socialize with anybody who has minor children without permission of the probation officer.

You shall notify any organization which sponsors activities in which adults supervise children of your conviction when volunteering or applying for a job in Pursuant to A.R.S. 13-3716.

AZ court records

Rosenbaum was convicted on Aug 8, 2016, for interfering with a monitoring device and was placed on lifetime probation in 2002. However, court records say, he had violations while on probation, including using synthetic cannabinoid and alcohol, not participating in sex offender treatment, and accessing sexually oriented materials considered inappropriate.

While in prison in Arizona, he racked up many violations.

contact including the residence, electronic or 3rd party with: Kariann S, Park Ridge Inn.”

3. Rosenbaum, Who Was Homeless for a Time & Known as 'Jo Jo,' Was Released From the Hospital the Day of the Shooting



Exhibit Joseph Rosenbaum

According to NBC Chicago, Rosenbaum was released from a Milwaukee hospital on the day of the shootings. He was there for a suicide attempt.

Testimony indicated that he was carrying a hospital bag the night of the shooting, and he threw it at Rittenhouse.

In a lengthy profile of Rosenbaum, The Washington Post said that he didn't "belong to either side" of the protests and riots. It was his second suicide attempt in a month, the newspaper reported, adding that the bag carried a "deodorant stick, underwear and sock," and noting that Rosenbaum had never attended a protest and was at the scene "almost by accident."

Testimony indicated he tried to get his bipolar medication prescription filled that day but the pharmacy was closed due to the arson fires and unrest.

According to the Post, he first went to see his fiancée at a "cheap motel room," but there was a no-contact order with her, so he left. He came to Kenosha because the mother of his child moved there with the girl, but he did not have custody, according to the Post, which said he found a new fiancée, with whom he lived throughout the winter in a tent, spending days getting free meals at fast-food restaurants.

"We lived off of each other's body heat," she told The Post, describing Rosenbaum, whom she called "Jo Jo," as "just goofy" and "he'd make you laugh out of nowhere."

They slept behind dumpsters and then ended up in a cheap motel paid for by the county, where Rosenbaum did "odd jobs."

When his fiancée found pornography on his phone, the Post reported, "Rosenbaum body-slammed her" and ended up in jail. He attempted suicide.

“He wasn’t down there as a rioter or a looter,” his fiancée told The Post. “Why was he there? I have no answer. I ask myself that question every day.”



GettyKariann Swart.

Kariann Swart, Rosenbaum’s fiancée, testified in court and described them as homeless and living in a tent at first. She said that Rosenbaum came to Kenosha from Texas because of his daughter.

At the time of his Arizona arrest, Joseph Don Rosenbaum was listed as being 5 foot three inches tall and 160 pounds. He was born in Waco, Texas, was listed as being unemployed for three years, and was described as a “fast food worker.” He was also known as “Powder.”

“We just spent a lot of time talking, getting to know one another, and laughing and joking around. He was a very animated person like that,” she said, according to NPR.

4. Witnesses Described His Belligerent Behavior That Night, Including Using a Racial Slur

Play

Joseph Rosenbaum begging, "Shoot Me NiQQA", before being shot. Sex Offender Joseph Rosenbaum begging for a confrontation, moments before being killed. Featuring Kyle Rittenhouse. 2020-08-29T05:41:39Z

Rosenbaum was captured on video using a racial slur and urging people to “shoot” him. During the trial, he was repeatedly described by witnesses, some of them testifying for the prosecution, as belligerent, agitated, and getting into verbal fights. He was seen with a chain and involved in an arson fire at a dumpster.



Court exhibi

This exhibit was presented in court. Rosenbaum is on left, wearing a blue mask.



Defense exhibit Joseph Rosenbaum

Ryan Balch, a combat veteran who testified he came to Kenosha to protect property, was hanging out with Rittenhouse that night. He testified that Rosenbaum was “hyper-aggressive” and was “acting out in a violent manner,” saying he was throwing rocks and involved in starting arson fires.

He claims Rosenbaum threatened a group that included Rittenhouse, saying, “If I catch you guys alone tonight, I’m going to f***ing kill you.”

Jason Lackowski, another combat veteran there, testified that Rosenbaum was acting “belligerently” and like a “babbling idiot,” but said he wasn’t scared of him.

JoAnn Fiedler, a Wisconsin woman who went to Kenosha to protect businesses, also testified that Rosenbaum made a threat to the group; Rittenhouse reiterated this on the stand.

5. The Rosenbaum Shooting Is Captured on Graphic Videos

The Rosenbaum shooting is captured on three videos; a citizen video, a drone video, and an FBI infrared video taken from a plane. Each video shows Rosebaum chasing Rittenhouse, gaining ground on him, and then being shot at close distance. Watch the videos in the case [here](#).

Prosecutors contended that the drone video showed Rittenhouse pointing a gun first at a man named Joshua Ziminski, who was armed with a gun he fired in the air a couple seconds before Rittenhouse shot Rosenbaum. Ziminski and Rosenbaum were near cars when Rittenhouse walked by. The defense denied Rittenhouse pointed the gun, and they asked for a mistrial with prejudice because they say prosecutors gave them a lower quality version of the video.

The judge allowed the jury to consider a provocation argument from the prosecution; if they believed Rittenhouse pointed the gun first, provoking Rosenbaum, then it created extra hurdles for self-defense (he had to show he exhausted all avenues of escape and gave Rosenbaum adequate notice he was exiting the confrontation). The jury didn't agree; they found he acted in self-defense. Rosenbaum had taken off his shirt and tied it around his head.

Rosenbaum did not have a weapon, but the defense argued Rittenhouse reasonably feared he was going to disarm him of his weapon or subject him to great bodily harm.

Kenosha Police Detective Martin Howard testified that Rittenhouse yelled, “friendly, friendly, friendly,” about when Rosenbaum started chasing him.

“That didn’t dissuade Mr. Rosenbaum from continuing to attempt to attack my client right?” defense attorney Mark Richards asked Howard. “Correct,” said Howard, who added that Rosenbaum was “gradually gaining ground on Mr. Rittenhouse.”

Play

Kyle Rittenhouse Thermal Image Video from FBI Plane
Kyle Rittenhouse Thermal Image Video from FBI Plane
2021-11-03T21:41:21Z

Richie McGinniss, who was running behind Rosenbaum, and who is video editor of the Daily Caller, testified that Rosenbaum “lunged” for Rittenhouse’s gun and “threw his momentum toward the weapon,” trying to get it.

“It was very clear to me that he (Rosenbaum) was reaching specifically for the weapon because that’s where his hands went,” McGinniss testified, demonstrating the lunge. He said Rittenhouse had his gun pointed downward at first, and Rosenbaum was “running as fast as he could.”

“It appeared he was lunging for the front portion of the weapon,” McGinniss testified. He said Rosenbaum yelled f*** you, sounding “very angry.”

